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**Title :** Vessel strikes of Bryde's whales (*Balaenoptera edeni*) in New Zealand

**Category :** Conservation

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**Preferred Format :** Poster Presentation

**Abstract :** Collisions with motorised vessels are a recognised source of whale mortality. Little has been done to compile information on their occurrence and frequency in New Zealand waters. The Hauraki Gulf is an intense shipping passage adjacent to Auckland, the major population centre of New Zealand. The gulf has three major shipping channels with approximately 4000 commercial vessel movements per annum recorded. In addition, private vessel traffic, including large motor and sailing boats, is high. Although Bryde's whales (*Balaenoptera edeni*) are common in New Zealand waters and are found in the Gulf year-round, the size of the local population is unknown. Here we report on a likely ship strike mortality of a Bryde's whale in the Hauraki Gulf during January 2003. We also reviewed the New Zealand National Whale Stranding Database, with records dating back to 1840, to evaluate the minimum number of ship strikes among these and other baleen whale species. We evaluated levels of evidence implicating such whale strike events and suggest criteria for comparative studies or estimating trends. We discuss the significance for the management and conservation of the Hauraki Gulf Bryde's whales relative to possible demographic impacts in a high traffic environment.